

legislation would order the executive branch to explain whenever it rejects, postpones or changes a military request from Taiwan.

This bill was introduced because key lawmakers of both parties value the island as a loyal ally and key trading partner. Taiwan deserves entry into the World Trade Organization, as does Mainland China, especially since Taiwan is free, open, and democratic.

How can Americans who live in a country that is the self-proclaimed "leader of the free world" ever abandon a free country to dictatorship? At the very least, the people's representatives in the legislative branch of our government can hold the executive branch to account when it comes to defensive armaments in Taiwan.

SENATOR PAT THOMAS—DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN LEGISLATOR, GREAT FLORIDIAN, AND GREAT AMERICAN

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, today I pay tribute to Florida State Senator Pat Thomas. Pat was a genial, small-town, citizen legislator with a big heart and a folksy touch, who served in the Florida Legislature for nearly 30 years. Sen. Thomas passed away yesterday, after a bout with cancer. He was 66.

Senator Thomas leaves a legacy of integrity, loyalty, and good cheer. He was emblematic of an era when big-hearted, back-slapping country politicians were the rule rather than the exception.

He was remembered by his colleague State Representative Al Lawson as an "uncommon man who had the common touch. As a hero to his community, because he grew up there poor and knew what it was to have opportunity through education."

Pat began his political career as a teenager in the Future Farmers of America and was active in student politics at the University of Florida. Thomas became a power in the Florida Democratic Party during the heyday of the "Pork Chop Gang" of the early 1960s, and served as Party Chair from 1966–70. When I served in the Florida Senate from 1982–1992, he was still a powerful force to be reckoned with. He served as Senate President in 1992 and again in 1994.

Senator Thomas was equally at home in the tobacco barns of his native Gadsden County and fish fries of the campaign trail as he was in the back rooms and power suites of the Florida Capitol.

But that is only part of Pat Thomas' legacy. He genuinely loved people and delivered the kinds of basic services that they needed—roads, sewers, and education. He kept a black and white photograph in his office showing two small children in his district getting water from a creek. He once used that photo during debate to persuade the Legislature to extend water service to parts of Gadsden County that had not been served. That's the kind of person he was, always looking out for the "little people."

History books will likely remember him for his major legislative accomplishments, what some derisively refer to as "turkeys or pork." But, his major strength as a legislator was

finessing a good deal, so it's no surprise that he himself considered local projects such as water towers and schools to be among his top achievements.

Pat Thomas worked with great diligence in serving the best interests of his constituents and the people of Florida. But, above all, he was a fine gentleman whose good nature and passion for life and public service endeared him to so many.

Mr. Speaker, few have achieved the success that Senator Pat Thomas has known in his profession. Few have achieved such universal respect and love. He was a compassionate giant who did common things, uncommonly well.

Mary McLeod Bethune was fond of saying, "service is the price that we pay for the space that God lets us occupy." Mr. Speaker, we have lost not only a great public servant, but a great Floridian and, indeed, a great American.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HAINES FALLS FREE LIBRARY

HON. JOHN E. SWEENEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate a small group of citizens dedicated to the maintenance of an important public institution in the Twenty-Second Congressional District of New York. One hundred years ago, a small group of residents from Haines Falls and Twilight Park began an effort to establish a small public library to serve their residents. Their mission was simple: "to maintain a circulating library and reading room for public use of residents of Haines Falls and vicinity."

Much has changed since this original mission statement was written. The library has seen significant growth over the years. The original gift to two hundred books, by Stephen P. Sturges in 1900, has grown to include over 10,000. A book mobile has come and gone and the library is now filling the growing demand for new technology by offering fax and internet capability.

The Haines Falls Free Library is truly a treasure. It offers a unique collection of out-of-print books, photographs and slides of the area. The numerous local family genealogies alone are priceless.

Mr. Speaker, while change is inevitable in today's fast paced society, one thing has remained exactly the same as it was one-hundred years ago—the local commitment to the Haines Falls Free Library. The dedication of Haines Falls residents to maintaining and expanding a fully functional library is extraordinary.

Indeed Mr. Speaker, the commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the Haines Falls Library is truly a cause for celebration. From its inception, this endeavor to provide a public service available to all citizens, symbolizes the altruistic spirit that has built our great nation.

I ask my colleagues to join me in commemorating this very special occasion. May the next hundred years allow the residents of Haines Falls and Twilight Park to continue the

friendly and specialized services that the Haines Falls Free Library has offered for the last century.

WORLDCOM-SPRINT MERGER

HON. MICHAEL G. OXLEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to address a couple of very recent news articles about the WorldCom-Sprint merger. I have been a supporter of the proposed merger since its announcement in October of 1999. My reasons for supporting the merger are the same now as they were then. When we wrote and passed the Telecommunications Act of 1996, we predicted many things, among them some consolidation in the telecom market. One of the major reasons for this urge to merge is to accommodate positive changes in the industry both domestically and internationally. These changes would be the direct result of greater competition and the resulting growth in the telecommunications sector.

The distinctions between local and long distance have begun to blur and almost disappear. Telecommunications companies, in order to survive and compete on a global basis need to have global size and reach. The fastest and most practical way to achieve such economies of scale is through strategic unions. The new world telecom company must provide services that will go beyond local or long distance. They must offer a wide range of services including at the very least local, long distance, high-speed Internet access, and wireless.

I believe the proposed WorldCom-Sprint merger is a textbook example of what we in Congress envisioned when we passed the Telecom Act. The combination of these two corporations would create an American company suited to compete with anybody and everybody on a global basis for the foreseeable future. Its size and offerings will create jobs, encourage technological innovations, and promote competitive pricing for consumers.

Given that, you can see why I am so concerned about the recent articles I've read in the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal stating that the European Commission is on the verge of recommending against approving the merger. While I'm not privy to the technical reviews conducted by the E.C. and don't know why they may have reached their reported conclusion, I find it disconcerting to see actual quotes attributed to "senior EU officials" before the member states have voted. I also find it troublesome to read in the papers statements made by U.S. Department of Justice officials stating that they are inclined to recommend that the merger be blocked. Does the merger review process encourage the publication of intentions, real or imagined, which could have an effect on the final outcome of the review? I doubt that it does, and I am confident that it is not productive to do so. I believe it is important that the all merger review panels have an established and fair process to which they strictly adhere. Perhaps if that can still be done, they will find that this merger brings a great deal to the economy, the telecom industry and the consumers it seeks to serve.

TRIBUTE TO ATHLETE OTIS
HARRIS JR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand before you and recognize the outstanding sportsmanship and accomplishments of one of the top 400-meter high school runners that Mississippi has ever produced. Otis Harris Jr., has show-

cased his talents to the people in Mississippi, and is now on his way to impress the world.

Harris is a recent graduate of Hinds Agricultural High School. During his high school career, he participated in some of the nation's most prestigious track events. He won the Class 2A 100, 200, and 400 meter races as a junior and continued his success as a senior by winning the 200, and the 400 meter races. To add to his accomplishments, Harris helped his high school win three consecutive Class 2A titles. He was also named to the All-State track and field team. Harris' performances

over the years have landed him an invitation to compete in the U.S. Junior Nationals located in Denton, Texas. There, he will be competing against the best high school and college freshman runners from around the country for a spot on the National Junior Olympic world team.

Mr. Speaker, Otis Harris Jr. exemplifies the strength and determination of America's youth. His track records show that he has what it takes to excel at all of his endeavors. He is sure to represent the State of Mississippi well for a long time to come.